

1                   **SALSA: Sustainable Agricultural Systems in Southeast Asia**  
2                   **Building Research and Training Networks on Sustainable Development Goals**

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14  
15                   **Abstract**

16 The issue of sustainability of tropical commodity chains is a major issue in Southeast  
17 Asia. The recurrent public debate around the impacts of oil palm cultivation, in  
18 particular, crystallizes opinions and has direct consequences on the relationship  
19 between importing and producing countries withn many direct and indirect  
20 consequences, both on the diplomatic and economic areas.

21 The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals,  
22 are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all  
23 people enjoy peace and prosperity.

24 In order to realize SDG ambitions in the field of sustainable commodity chains,  
25 CIRAD and its regional partners are setting up a partnership platform for the  
26 construction of scientific projects and training curricula in South-East Asia, a region  
27 of the world where problems related to the sustainability of major agricultural sectors  
28 are particularly prominent (deforestation, rural poverty reduction, family farming,  
29 etc.).

30 SALSA (Sustainable Agricultural Landscapes in Southeast Asia) aims at regionally  
31 federating and mobilizing scientific and training skills on the sustainability of  
32 perennial crops sectors. SALSA will promote, within a framework of collective  
33 action, the concrete integration of disciplines and multi-stakeholder teams into  
34 research, training and development projects that will be conducted on the ground  
35 through shared experimental networks and academic and training curricula tailored to  
36 the needs for present and future skills.

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39 **Key words:** Sustainability - Agricultural development - Land use change - Plantation  
40 management – Standards.

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43                   **Background**

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45 On March 28-30, 2017, Dr Michel Eddi, CEO of CIRAD, joined the President of the  
46 French Republic François Hollande during his State visit to Southeast Asia. On this  
47 occasion, he initiated with several CIRAD partners the construction of the SALSA  
48 (Sustainable Agricultural Landscapes in Southeast Asia) partnership platform  
49 dedicated to the sustainability of perennial crop systems throughout the region. The

launch of this ambitious scientific platform, in which training will be a pivotal component, was formalized by the signing of two multilateral agreements, under the patronage of the French Head of State, in the presence of the Prime Minister of the Government of Malaysia and the President of the Republic of Indonesia.

## **Sustainability of tropical commodity chains is at the heart of the public debate**

The sustainability of tropical commodity chains is a major issue in Southeast Asia. The recurrent public debate around the impacts of oil palm cultivation, in particular, crystallizes public opinions and this has direct consequences on the relationship between importing and producing countries, with many direct and indirect consequences, both on the diplomatic and economic areas.

This situation was reflected at several recent occasions. Indeed, French Parliament discussions on a law proposal suggesting a high differential taxation of palm, palm kernel and coconut oils resulted after several weeks of public debate in a proposal for the exemption from any taxation for certified sustainable vegetable oils. Indonesia and Malaysia, the world's two largest palm oil producers, opposed such a tax, saying it was discriminatory and broke international trade rules. The proposal was finally canceled but the public debate is still present.

Indeed, on 6 July 2017 the French Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, Mr Nicolas Hulot, presented its Government's Climate Plan. One of its recommendations, among many others, was to "Stop importing products that contribute to deforestation: imports of products that are bringing about the destruction of the world's three major tropical rainforests (Amazonia, South-East Asia and Congo Basin) will be swiftly brought to a halt." The Plan did not detail measures envisaged but Minister Hulot said he wanted to stop "imported deforestation" in France, citing unsustainable soybean and palm oil production in the countries of origin.

Such decisions were quickly interpreted in Indonesia and Malaysia as protectionist measures backed by European oilseed industries, lightning another fire in already turbulent diplomatic and trade relationship.

## **Filling huge knowledge gaps**

The regional burning issues addressed by such an opinionated public debate include major topics such as deforestation and recurrent haze, the traceability of tropical commodity chains (palm oil, timber, rubber ...) or the credibility of sustainability standards.

Such issues are rooted in basic questions addressed to agricultural R&D, which are not exactly new, but increasingly of shared and major concern. Indeed, developers and decision makers must still make choices about which type of agricultural developmental they adopt for their district, region, or country: agricultural development vs conservation of natural spaces; intensive monoculture vs agroforestry; agroindustrial estates vs family farming and more broadly: performance vs resilience. Science experts and stakeholders now all agree on the existing lack of shared knowledge and common basis of training and R&D about sustainable agricultural development in SouthEast Asia.

Thanks to their extensive scientific expertise in perennial crops, CIRAD and its partners in the Global South explore the necessary changes in tropical agricultural

sectors in the three components of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. Drawing on more than sixty years of research in tropical agricultural sectors and, beyond that, on an historical involvement in plant breeding and sustainable management of plantations, CIRAD's work is aiming at providing stakeholders with robust and credible research outputs which generate knowledge about sustainable production systems able at reducing negative impacts on people and their environment.

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## 109 **Building on Sustainable Development Goals**

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111 The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

112 These 17 Goals build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, while including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities. The goals are interconnected – often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another.

119 The SDGs work in the spirit of partnership and pragmatism to make the right choices now to improve life, in a sustainable way, for future generations. They provide clear guidelines and targets for all countries to adopt in accordance with their own priorities and the environmental challenges of the world at large. The SDGs are an inclusive agenda. They tackle the root causes of poverty and unite us together to make a positive change for both people and planet. “Poverty eradication is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, and so is the commitment to leave no-one behind,” UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner said. “The Agenda offers a unique opportunity to put the whole world on a more prosperous and sustainable development path. In many ways, it reflects what UNDP was created for.”

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## 131 **The SALSA Platform**

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133 In order to realize SDG ambitions in the field of sustainable commodity chains, CIRAD and regional partners are setting up a partnership platform for the construction of scientific projects and training curricula with its public and private partners in, South-East Asia, a region of the world where problems related to the sustainability of major agricultural sectors are particularly prominent (deforestation, rural poverty reduction, family farming, etc.).

139 SALSA (Sustainable Agricultural Landscapes in Southeast Asia) aims at regionally federating and mobilizing scientific and training skills on the sustainability of perennial crops sectors. SALSA will promote, within a framework of collective action, the concrete integration of disciplines and multi-stakeholder teams into research, training and development projects that will be conducted on the ground through shared experimental networks and academic and training curricula tailored to the needs for present and future skills.

146 According to Michel Eddi, CIRAD's CEO: "The question is of being able to propose frameworks of actions and instruments to the public authorities and economic and social actors, in countries from both global North and South, making it possible to progress substantially towards the Sustainability objective, which today is not

achieved. The aims are to enrich the incentive tools in the context of public policies in order to promote sustainability, to improve and to make some convergence in the existing certification systems and to set up independent observatories aimed at qualifying and assessing progress made by all actors at the service of this collective ambition. "

### **Building an active network of partners SouthEast Aia**

Partnership research is the backbone of CIRAD's work in developing and emerging countries. CIRAD action is most often structured around multidisciplinary platforms designed to answer to major questions of regional interest which are related to agricultural development. The most successful form of this partnership is the creation of a partnership arrangement with all the actors involved.

In Malaysia, CIRAD has developed a network of partners which is building since 2009 on the assignment of research officers to Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The first circle of members involved in the construction of the SALSA platform consists of Universiti Putra Malaysia, the ASAHIL network of ASEAN Universities and the University of Montpellier, France.

In Indonesia, the founding members of SALSA are the two plantation companies PT SMART and PT Socfindo, which have long been engaged with CIRAD on field research on the sustainability of oil palm and rubber plantations. Another member is PT RPN, the national plantation crop research network, and also the Asian Pacific Coconut Community, the regional association of coconut-producing countries, an institutional partner under the aegis of the United Nations.

New institutional partners, universities, research centers, private institutions or NGOs will gradually be integrated around this initial nucleus, including from other countries in the region such as Thailand, Singapore and The Philippines.

### **Academic and vocational training are key component of SALSA**

In order to meet the expectations of partners, both public (development of academic curricula on themes related to sustainable development) and private (strong demand for plantation managers trained on the basis of the sustainability of practices and certification standards), the SALSA Partnership Platform will have an important pillar centered on training through research.

The expected results of the establishment of a network of partners with complementary and international skills in South-East Asia will be:

1. Initial and life long training on sustainable practices for plantation and cooperative managers, sustainability managers and R&D staff, based on a common understanding of ideas and concepts for sustainable development, based on SDGs ;
2. Science-based evidence for the strengthening and improvement of current and future sustainability standards for major commodity chains in the region (palm oil as a start, but also, rubber, timber, coconut, etc...) ;
3. The production of knowledge and innovations following international excellence standards, capable of delivering reliable answers to the questions posed by the producers, the civil society and the decision-makers, both in producer and consumer countries.



## **An agenda for action**

Following the signature of Letters of Intention by major SALSA partners on March 2017, the action plan now is to work together and then agree on two pivotal founding documents:

- i) the **SALSA Consortium Agreement** which will provide the first circle of partners with a legal framework and
- ii) a shared and ambitions **SALSA Scientific Project** of common interest which will describe the future avenues for research and development, their specific milestones and timely expected outputs for end-users.
- iii)

The coming steps will thus involve a series of Seminars and Workshops aimed at clarifying any questions about common goals and governance of the partnership and prioritised actions emerging from discussions among partners.

Such seminars have already been organised at Cirad in Montpellier (internal meeting) in July 2017, followed by a meeting on SALSA involment in Masters Curricula organised at UPM Faculty of Agriculture in Malaysia in October 2017.

During the coming months, other seminars will be organised on both a national and regional basis as side events of major conferences on the topic of sustainable lanscapes in the region (RSPO RT15, ICOPE 2018, etc ...).

Meanwhile the continuous advocacy of the SALSA concept to major donors such as EU, AFD or FAO is going on.

## **References**

The SALSA Platform

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

The Sustainable Development Goals:

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# SALSA - Sustainable Agricultural Systems in Southeast Asia



## Building Research and Training Networks on Sustainable Development Goals

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Cirad / UPM

Phitsanulok, 13 december 2017

## Cirad: A public mandate for agricultural research

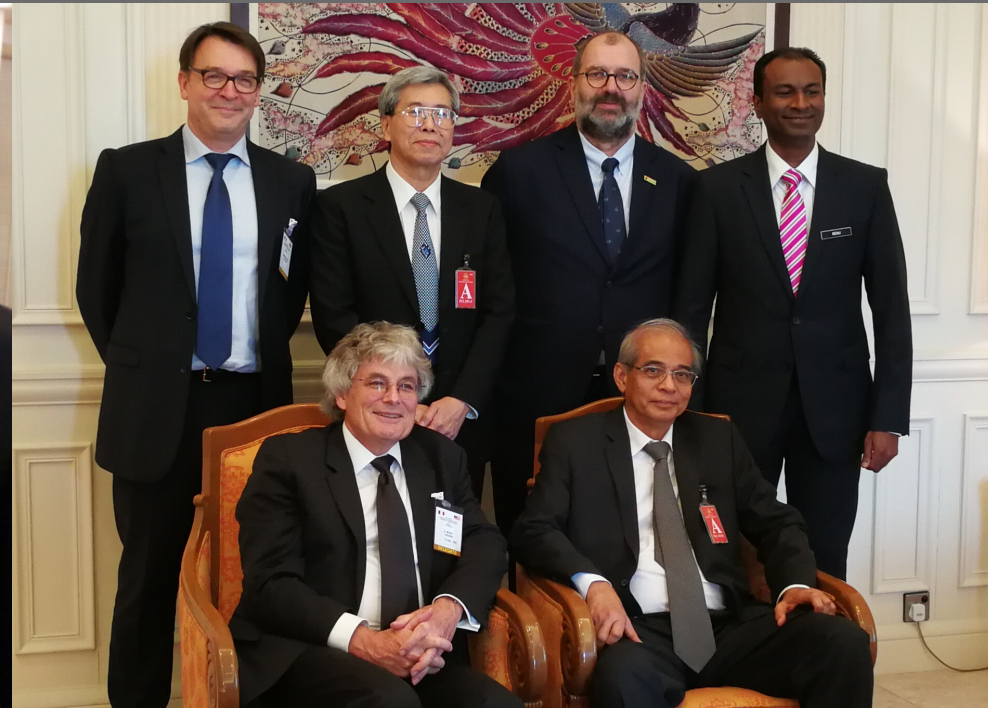
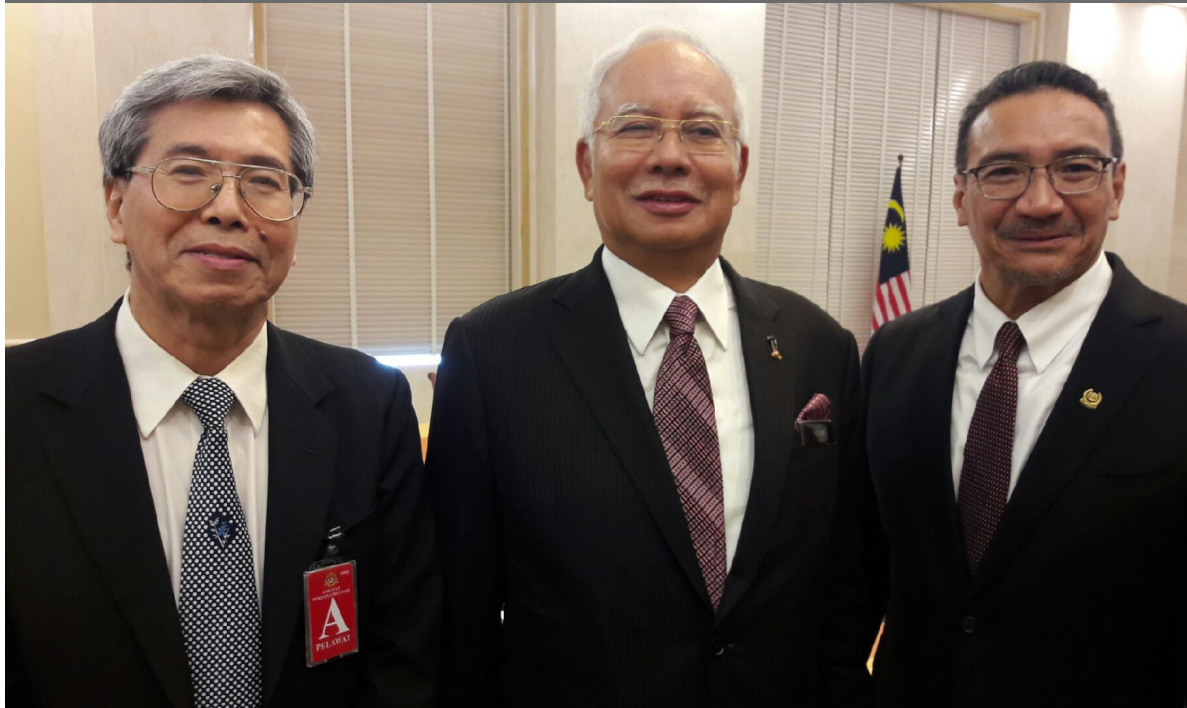


- CIRAD is the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development
- A public research centre working with developing countries to tackle international agricultural and development issues.
- Research programs at CIRAD involve life sciences, social sciences and engineering sciences, applied to agriculture, food and rural territories.
- A staff of 1800, including 800 research officers.
- Joint operations with more than 90 countries.
- 12 regional offices in metropolitan France, the French overseas regions and tropical countries.
- A 200 million € budget.
- 5 million € spent on PhD training for 800 research and technical staff worldwide.





# SALSA - Sustainable Agricultural Systems in Southeast Asia

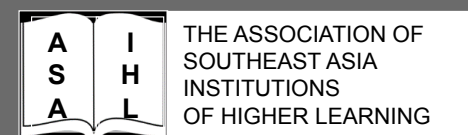




## SALSA – Official launch, 28-29 Mars 2017



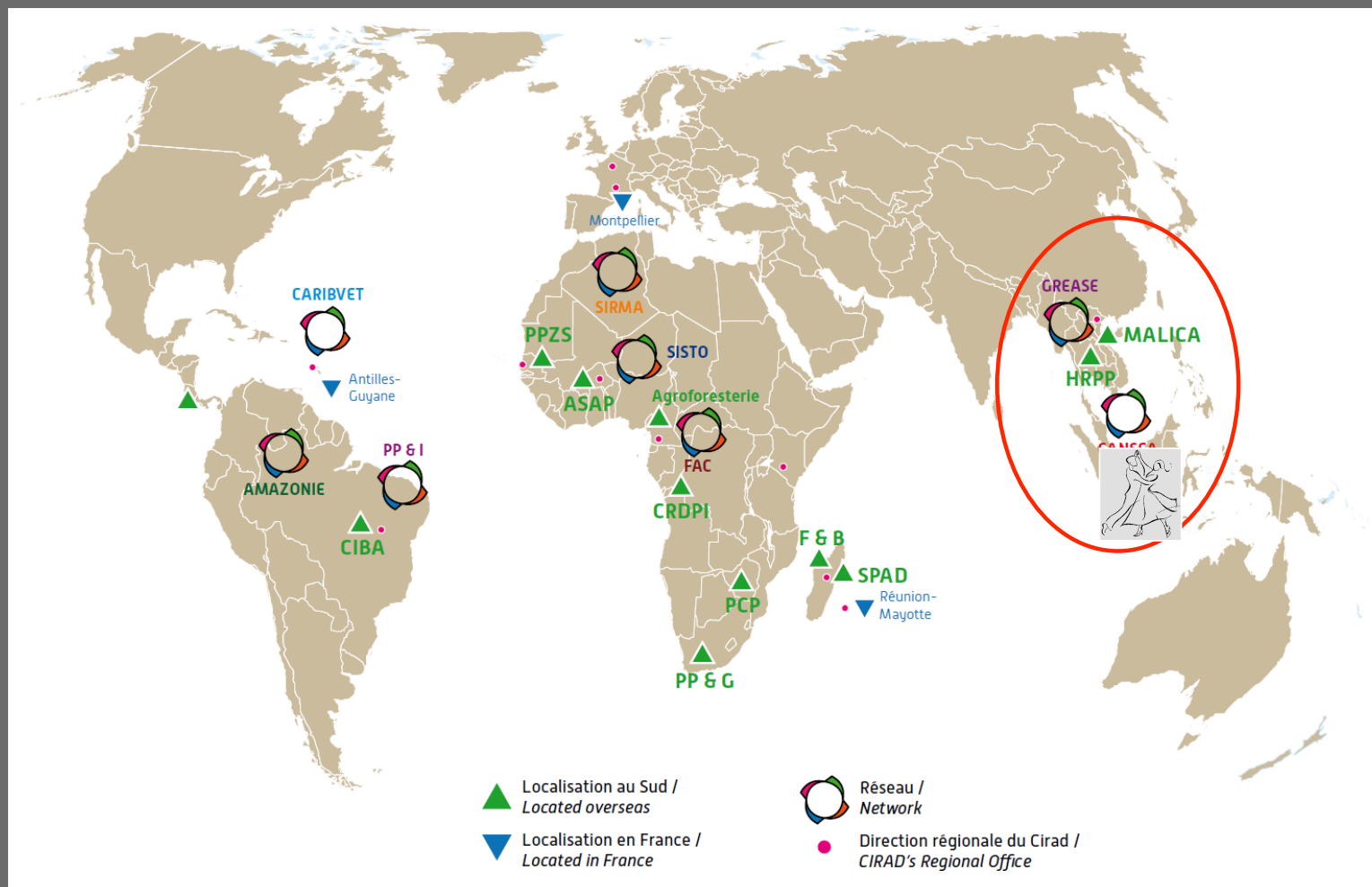
In Malaysia, Cirad developped a network of partners, started in 2009 with the position of scientists at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The first cercle of members is formed by **Universiti Putra Malaysia, ASAHIL, and Montpellier University.**



In Indonesia, SALSA members are **two plantation companies: PT SMART et PT Socfindo**, engagées de longue date avec le Cirad sur des recherches de terrain consacrés à la durabilité de l'exploitation du palmier à huile et de l'hévéa, and **PT RPN, the national research network on plantation crops**, and the **Asian Pacific Coconut Community**, a partner under the umbrella of United Nations.



# 14 Partnership Platforms worldwide

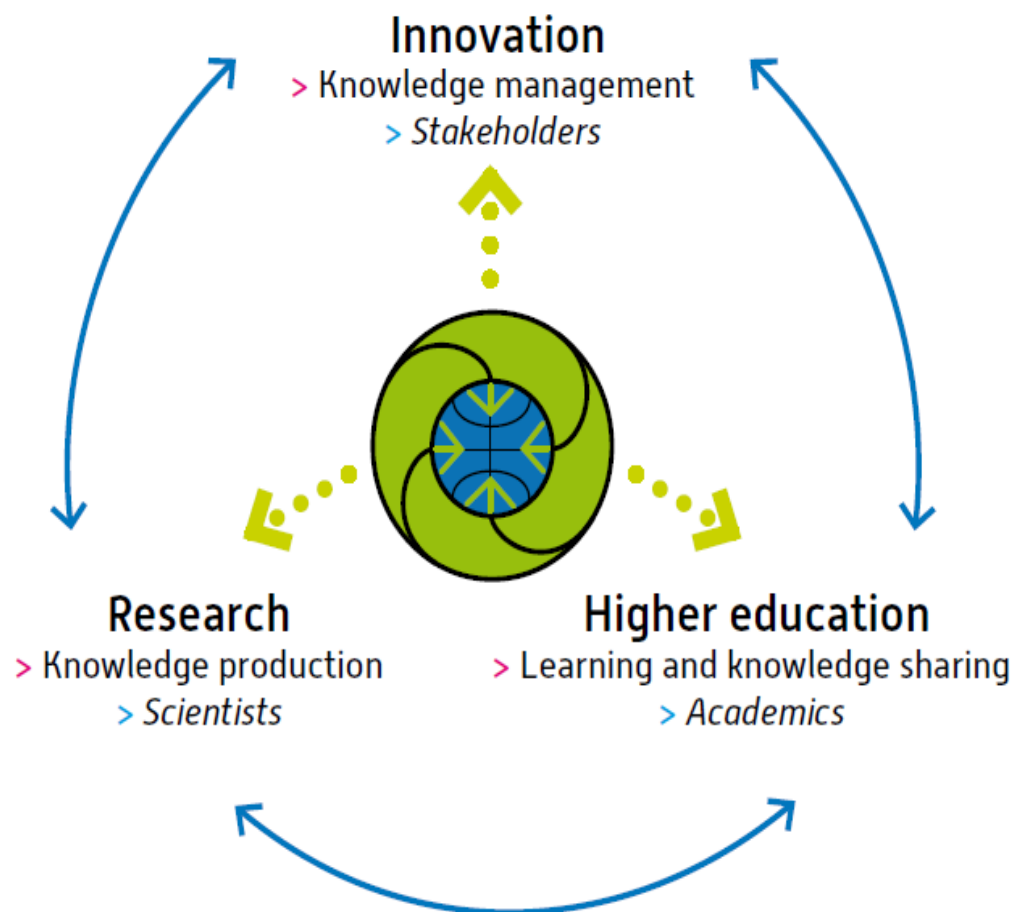


## 4 Partnership Platforms in SEA



## *A Platform in Partnership for research and training*

- A group of partners and the desire to work together
- Shared outlooks and objectives
- The long-term commitment of human, material and financial resources to achieve the objectives
- A shared research theme
- A defined geographical area
- A critical mass of multiple competences and activities.



## They are all different

- Come in various size and colours
- Are definitely out of infancy
- Can gather various groups of stakeholders
- Are living adaptable organisms
- Maintain permanent brainstorming

## They share many common traits

- Tackle key agricultural issues in SEA
- Revolving chairs governance
- Generate world-class research results
- Importance of training and capacity building
- Provide an education to collaborative research
- Prepare partnership to burgeoning projects
- Inclusive approach of collaborative research







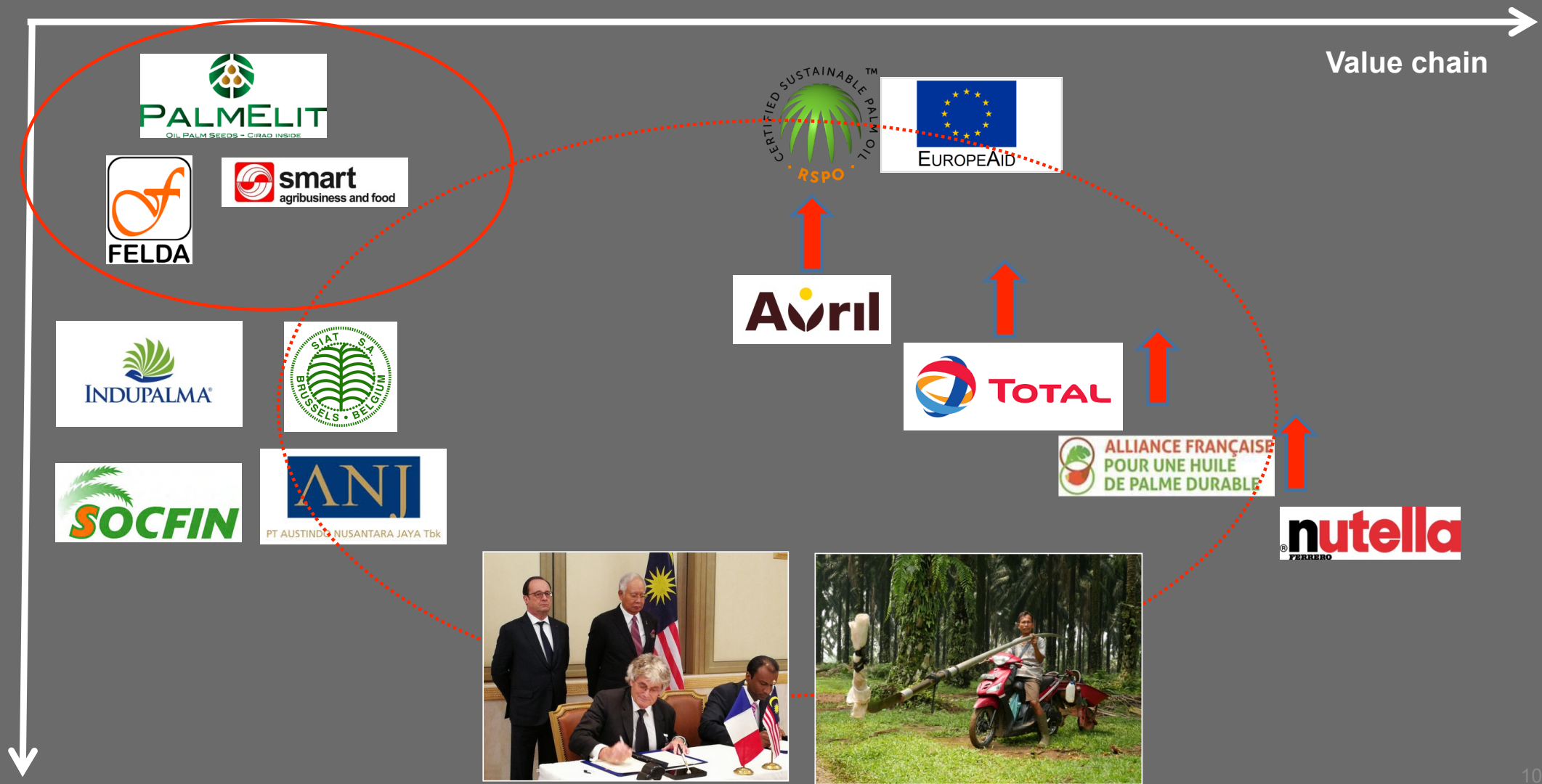
## Several burning issues...

- Deforestation/Haze
- Traceability in tropical chains (palm oil, timber ...)
- Credibility of sustainability standards
- Lack of shared knowledge
- Common basis of training and R&D

## ... rooted in basic questions to R&D

- Agricultural development vs Conservation
- Intensive monoculture vs Agroforestry
- Agroindustrial estates vs Family Farming
- Performance vs Resilience







## ■ A map of projects and partners

### ○ In project

- BiGHGDeal
- USAid peatlands
- UE agroforestry in Timor
- UE agroforestry in Myanmar
- RSPO Smallholders

### ○ On going

- PT SMART
- Socfindo
- Airbus (Biofuels from lignocellulose)
- Capital, finance and agriculture (Kasannah, Cifor, UM)

- SALSA is a Consortium Agreement with a legal framework for the first circle of partners
- It joins ambitions and common interest for describing the future avenues for research and development, their specific milestones and timely expected outputs for end-users.

## 2017 actions:

- Seminars and Workshops to clarify common goals, governance, and to let actions emerge from discussions among partners.
- 1) Cirad in Montpellier (internal meeting) in Jul. 2017,  
2) a meeting on SALSA involment in Masters Curricula at UPM Oct. 2017.

## Next immediate actions:

- Next: side events of major conferences on the topic of sustainable landscapes in SEA (RSPO RT15, ICOPE 2018, etc ...).
- Advocacy of the SALSA concept to donors such as EU, AFD or FAO is going on.

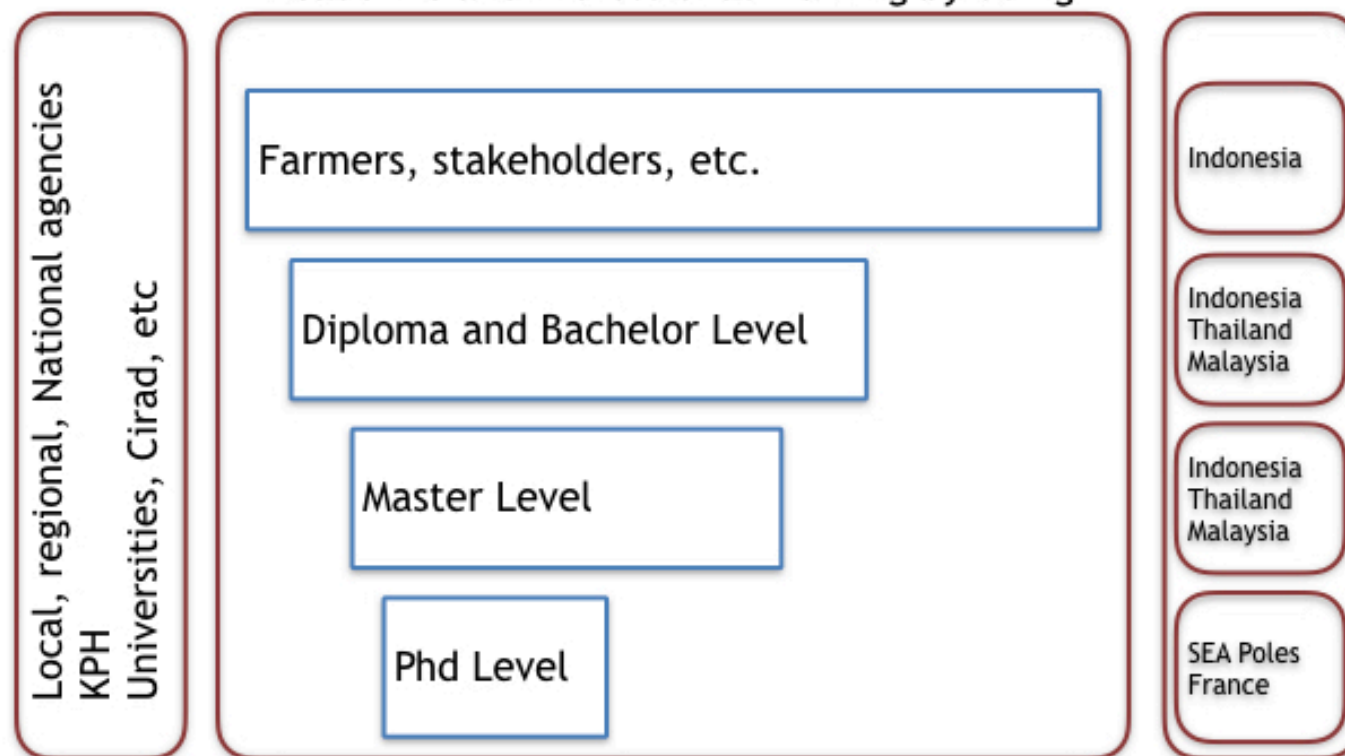


- Sustainability of tropical commodity chains is at the heart of the public debate :
  - French debate on palm oil and imported deforestation lighting fires in diplomatic and trade relationships between EU and Malaysia/Indonesia => Salsa can provide smart answers
- Filling huge knowledge gaps
  - deforestation and recurrent haze, the traceability of tropical commodity chains (palm oil, timber, rubber ...) or the credibility of sustainability standards => Salsa can help filling the gaps
- Building on Sustainable Development Goals
  - « Poverty eradication is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda » => Salsa again can help



## Capacity Building:

Academic and Professional Training by doing



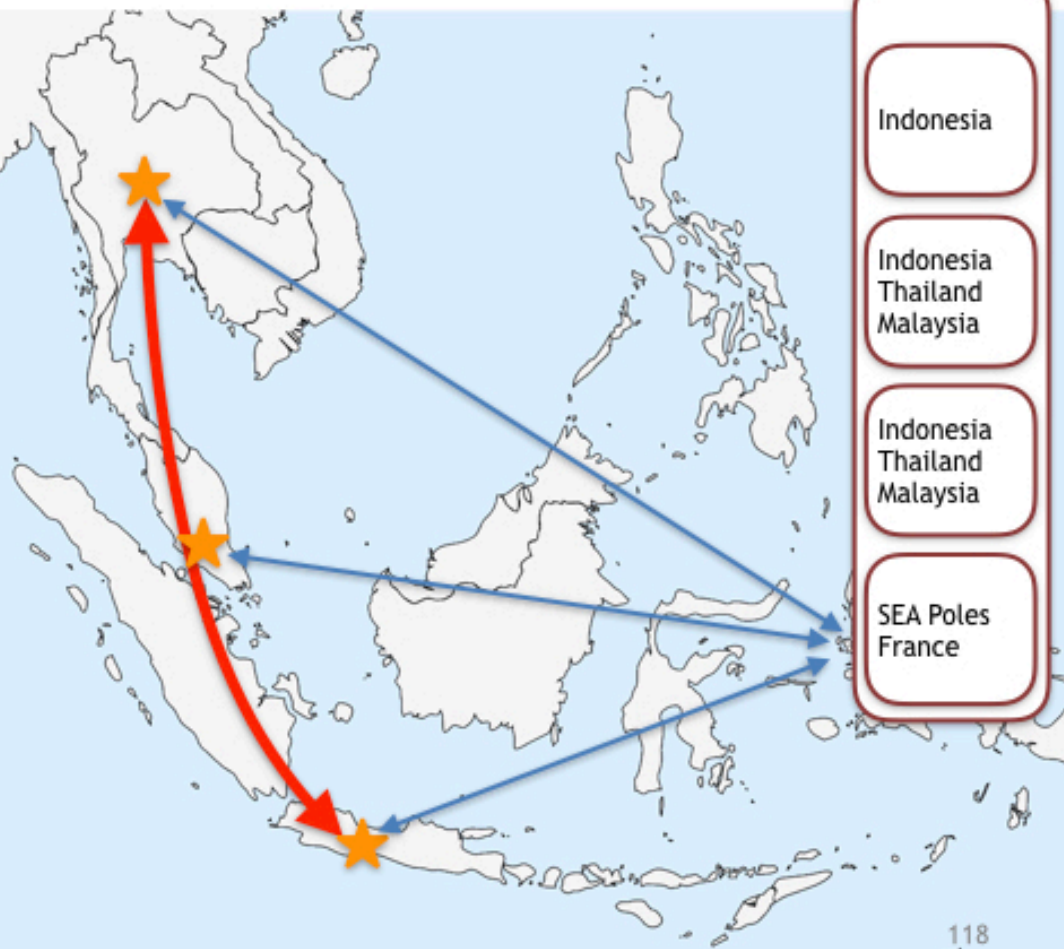
- **Training the brains and hearts  
who will manage  
tomorrow peatlands,  
and will know "how to sustainably solve problems"**



## Capacity Building:

Academic and Professional Training by doing

Local, regional, National agencies  
KPH  
Universities, Cirad, etc





Thank you for your attention